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### ESSENCE OF HOLIDAYS ACCORDING TO FOLK BELIEFS - III (BASED ON ETHNOGRAPHIC MATERIALS OBTAINED IN *MARTVILI MUNICIPALITY*)

Every region in Georgia has its unique, distinctive way of celebrating holidays and festivities. The chronology of the holiday is not homogenous. Frequently, religious syncretism combines the most ancient world view of the Georgians which sometimes is even stronger than the Christian one. In Grigol Robakidze's opinion, "Instead of eliminating paganism, Christianity absorbed it". Even though *Christianity* was first preached in Georgia as early as the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE by the Apostles of Jesus – *Andrew*, *Matthias* and *Simon the Cananean* (*Simon the Zealot*), and was declared a state religion in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, ancient pagan beliefs related to holidays and festivities still remain up to the present day, retaining traditional character.

Year by year, traces of paganism fade away. However, some of its layers are often traceable throughout the Orthodox Holidays.

The proposed article discusses the following holidays celebrated in the villages of *Martvili Municipality*: *Annunciation*, *Tsachkhuroba* (the holiday dedicated to the *Archangel's Church of Village Tsachkhuru*), *Alertoba*, *Iliaoba*, *Barbaroba*, and *Gadzghikoba*. The paper presents the meaning of the above-mentioned holidays from the religious as well as folk perspectives.